

A Shot in the Dark

During my senior year, I decided to try out for the school play. That year the school was performing the musical “Carousel.” I got the roll of David Bascombe and one of the sailors. I was supposed to carry a gun in one of the scenes, so I borrowed a .357 snub-nosed pistol with a shoulder holster from one of Clay’s friends. I searched around in several stores for blank cartridges but there weren’t many to be found. The only blanks I could find were extra loud ones and when I fired them, they really woke up the crowd. (Can you imagine if I would have brought a gun to a school in these days? I would have been serving time in juvenile detention.)

I was very careful with the gun during the play and never let it out of my sight. Before every performance I checked the rounds in it to make extra sure that they were blanks. I never let anyone touch the gun during the performance and wore it under my suit coat, concealed under my suit coat.

In one of my scenes, I was supposed to shoot “at” Gary Wilson who was playing the part of Jigger. Jigger was the bad influence for the main character and during the scene he was supposed to run off one side of the stage. After I squeezed off a couple of shots at Gary, I was supposed to swing around to keep Brian Long, who was playing the part of Billy, from running off the other side of the stage. There wasn’t much room, so I had to move quickly.

Well, during the last performance, I played my part in the scene like I was supposed to. I drew my pistol and Gary ran towards one side of the stage and Brian ran towards the other. I fired off a couple of shots at Gary and swung around to stop Brian before he got to the edge of the stage. When the scene was over and I was walking off the stage, some of the other actors told me that I had shot Gary and he was hurt.

I immediately got sick to my stomach and started looking for him. I was replaying the whole night in my mind. I knew that I had blanks in the gun because I checked them right before I went on stage like I always did, and I couldn’t figure out how I had hurt him. When I found Gary he must have seen the concern on my face because he smiled at me and said he was all right. After I found out he was fine, we had a good laugh.

When I shot “at” Gary, I hit him in the back with the wads from the blanks. I grouped the shots fairly nicely, because he had two small holes in his shirt and his back was bleeding. I had heard of people being killed from blanks and now I knew how it was done. I learned again that all guns are potentially deadly and need to be treated with respect.



Lee in Lehi High School's production of *Carousel*
(Gary Wilson is on the left)